(a) what is the number of those places in the country where oil and natural gas reserves have been found during last three years, Statewise details thereof;

(b) what steps are being taken by Government to make the country selfreliant in the matter of natural substances like oil and natural gas; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) During the last three years from 1996-97 to 1998-99, about 40 new oil and gas structures/finds have been discovered in the states of Assam, Andhra Pradesh Gujarat, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu as also in Western offshore.

(b) and (c) Various short-term and long term-measures taken to increase the production of oil and gas are:—

(i) Optimizing production from existing fields through better reservoir management, 3-D seismic surveys, infill drilling, pressure maintenance, installation/optimisation of artificial lift system and use of advanced and cost effective technologies and improvement in recovery factor.

(ii) Faster development of newly discovered oilfields.

(iii) Finding new hydrocarbon reserves through intensified exploration activities such as—

— Exploration at greater depths in existing fields.

— Extending exploration activities to deep waters and frontier areas.

— Increased private participation in exploration activities through implementation of New Exploration Licensing Policy.

Participation of Indian Shipping Companies for transportation of LNG

1624. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Shipping Companies have been knowingly kept-out from global bids for transportation of LNG from outside India to our country by M/s Petronet LNG;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps Government are planning so that Indian Shipping Companies can also participate in such global bids?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Pre-qualification Bid documents floated by Petronet LNG Ltd. (PLL) for transportation of Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) provide that the bidder will associate an Indian Shipping Company in ownership and operatorship of the LNG tankers and offer training programme to the Indian Personnel.

ONGC plan to get production of crude from North Gujarat

1625. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ONGC had planned to get the production of crude from North Gujarat passes through Navagam at the end of Ninth Plan (1999-2000) 6.10 MMTPA;

(b) whether it is also a fact that for this purpose the Desalter Plant equipment called Trains were installed; and

(c) whether it is a fact that ONGC incurred an avoidable expenditure of Rs. 9.55 crore for North Gujarat oil fields?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (c) Desalter plant having three trains, has been set up at Nawagam (Gujarat) for improving the quality of crude oil produced from North Gujarat oilfields. The third train installed at a cost of Rs. 9.55 crore serves as a stand by to meet any eventuality and also periodic shut downs at the plant, for maintaining the quality of crude.

Private sector oil companies participation in retail marketing

1626. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in near future private sector oil companies are starting retail marketing;

(b) if so, the details thereof;